

Application No. 09/634,566

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In the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for provisioning services offered by a service provider for a plurality of parties, the service provider managing a service provider infrastructure, the method comprising:

providing an interface by which a first party identifies attributes of a particular service to be shared with a second party and to be provisioned with the identified attributes on the service provider infrastructure by the service provider;

offering participation in the particular service to the second party via an interface by which the second party ~~may signal~~ is given an option to cause a signal indicating acceptance of the particular service according to the identified attributes; and

if in response to the signal indicating acceptance by the second party of the particular service ~~is signaled~~, then executing a process to provision the particular service with the identified attributes on the service provider infrastructure for use by the first party and by the second party.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, including:

establishing a connection between the service provider infrastructure and the first party for delivery of services according to parameters of a service provider account with the first party; and

establishing a connection between the service provider infrastructure and the second party for delivery of services according to parameters of a service provider account with the second party.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, including verifying that the service provider accounts of the first party and of the second party support the particular service.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the service provider infrastructure comprises a communication network, and the services comprise

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communication services, and the attributes of the particular service include parameters of a communication channel between the first party and the second party using the communication resources network of the service provider.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing an interface includes displaying an image prompting a user to create a logical instance of the particular service on behalf of the first party.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said offering includes displaying an image prompting a user to create a logical connection to the logical instance of the particular service to signal acceptance on behalf of the second party.

7. (original) The method of claim 5, including upon creation of the logical instance of the particular service, displaying an image prompting a user to offer the particular service to another party, on behalf of the first party.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, including sending the attributes of the particular service to the service provider for use in provisioning the particular service for the first and second parties.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the particular service is arranged for at least one additional party in addition to the first and second parties, including:
 offering participation in the particular service to the at least one additional party via an interface by which the at least one additional party ~~may signal~~ is given an option to cause a signal indicating acceptance of the particular service; and
 if in response to the signal indicating acceptance by the at least one additional party of the particular service ~~is signaled~~, then executing a process to provision the particular service for the at least one additional party.

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10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing an interface includes establishing a server, available to the first party via a public network, to manage the interface.
11. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein the server comprises an internet server available to the first party using an internet browser.
12. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said interface comprise an electronic document.
13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the electronic document includes objects compliant with a hypertext markup language HTML standard.
14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the HTML standard is XML.
15. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the infrastructure comprises an electric power distribution network, and the services comprise electric power delivery.
16. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the infrastructure comprises a fuel distribution network, and the services comprise fuel delivery.
17. (original) The method of claim 1, including providing said interface using a secure internet protocol.
18. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the infrastructure comprises a water distribution network, and the services comprise water delivery.
19. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the infrastructure comprises a communication network, and the services comprise secure communication bandwidth delivery.

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20. (original) The method of claim 1, including providing information via said interface by which said second party may signal acceptance, the information being associated with said offering from the first party for use by said second party independent of the service provider.

21. (currently amended) A method for provisioning services offered by a service provider for a plurality of parties, the service provider managing a service provider infrastructure. the method comprising:

establishing connections between the service provider infrastructure and a plurality of parties for delivery of services using the service provider infrastructure according to parameters of respective service provider accounts;

providing an interface by which a first party in the plurality of parties identifies attributes of a particular service to be shared with one or more other parties in the plurality of parties, and to be provisioned with the identified attributes on the service provider infrastructure by the service provider;

verifying that the service provider accounts of the first party and of said one or more other parties support the particular service;

offering participation in the particular service to said one or more other parties having service provider accounts which support the particular service via an interface by which said one or more other parties may signal are individually given an option to cause a signal indicating acceptance of the particular service; and

if in response to at least one signal indicating acceptance is signaled, then executing a process to provision the particular service with the identified attributes on the service provider infrastructure for use by the first party and by said one or more other parties which signaled acceptance.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the service provider infrastructure comprises a communication network, and the services comprise communication services, and the attributes of the particular service include parameters of a communication channel using the communication resources network of the service provider.

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23. (original) The method of claim 21, wherein said providing an interface includes displaying an image prompting a user to create a logical instance of the particular service on behalf of the first party.

24. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein said offering includes displaying an image prompting a user to create a logical connection to the logical instance of the particular service to signal acceptance on behalf of the second party.

25. (original) The method of claim 23, including upon creation of the logical instance of the particular service, displaying an image prompting a user to offer participation in the particular service to another party, on behalf of the first party.

26. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein said interface includes constructs by which said one or more other parties may indicate a location for connection to the particular service.

27. (original) The method of claim 21, including sending the attributes of the particular service to the service provider for use in provisioning the particular service for the first and second parties.

28. (original) The method of claim 21, wherein said providing an interface includes establishing a server, available to the first party via a public network, to manage the interface.

29. (original) The method of claim 28, wherein the server comprises an internet server available to the first party using an internet browser.

30. (original) The method of claim 21, wherein said interface comprise an electronic document.

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31. (original) The method of claim 30, wherein the electronic document includes objects compliant with a hypertext markup language HTML standard.

33. (original) The method of claim 30, wherein the HTML standard is XML.

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the service provider infrastructure comprises an electric power distribution network, and the services comprise electric power delivery.

34. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the service provider infrastructure comprises a fuel delivery network, and the services comprise fuel delivery.

35. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the service provider infrastructure comprises a water distribution network, and the services comprise water delivery.

36. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the service provider infrastructure comprises a communication network, and the services comprise secure communication bandwidth delivery.

37. (original) The method of claim 21, including providing information via said interface by which said one or more other parties may signal acceptance, the information being associated with said offering from the first party for use by said one or more other parties independent of the service provider.

38. (currently amended) A method for provisioning communication services in a communication network offered by a service provider for a plurality of parties, comprising:

establishing connections of a plurality of parties to the communication network for communication services, said connections comprising respective service interfaces and parameters of respective service provider accounts;

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providing ~~[[an]]~~ a user interface by which a first party in the plurality of parties identifies attributes of a particular communication channel in the communication network to be shared with one or more other parties in the plurality of parties, and to be provisioned by the service provider in the communication network;

verifying that the service provider accounts of the first party and of said one or more other parties support the particular communication channel;

offering participation in the particular communication channel to said one or more other parties having service provider accounts which support the particular communication channel via an interface by which said one or more other parties ~~may~~ signal are individually given an option to cause a signal indicating acceptance of the particular communication channel; and

if in response to at least one signal indicating acceptance is signaled, then executing a process to provision the particular communication channel for use by the first party and by said one or more other parties which signaled acceptance.

39. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein said respective service interfaces have unique network addresses, and said process to provision the particular interface includes establishing a tag to identify packets for use of the particular communication channel, configuring the service interfaces to use tag packets for use of the particular communication channel, and configuring switches in the network to route packets to and from the service interfaces in response to the unique network addresses and the tag in the packets.

40. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein the attributes of the particular communication channel include identifiers of service interfaces for the parties, and data indicating that the channel is to be one of a set including point-to-point, point-to-multipoint, or multipoint-to-multipoint.

41. (original) The method of claim 40, wherein the identifiers of service interfaces include MAC addresses.

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42. (original) The method of claim 39, wherein the unique network addresses comprise MAC addresses, and the tag comprises a VLAN tag.

43. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein the communication network comprises a metropolitan area network, including switches and optical fiber links configured in a tree.

44. (original) The method of claim 43, wherein said respective service interfaces have MAC addresses, and said process to provision the particular interface includes establishing a VLAN tag to identify packets for use of the particular communication channel, configuring the service interfaces to tag packets for use of the particular communication channel, and configuring switches in the network to route packets to and from the service interfaces in response to the MAC addresses and the VLAN tag in the packets.

45. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein said providing an interface includes displaying an image prompting a user to create a logical instance of the particular service on behalf of the first party.

46. (original) The method of claim 40, wherein said offering includes displaying an image prompting a user to create a logical connection to the logical instance of the particular communication channel to signal acceptance on behalf of the second party.

47. (original) The method of claim 46, including upon creation of the logical instance of the particular communication channel, displaying an image prompting a user to offer participation in the particular communication channel to another party, on behalf of the first party.

48. (original) The method of claim 38, including sending the attributes of the particular communication channel to the service provider for use in provisioning the particular communication channel for the first and second parties.

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49. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein said providing an interface includes establishing a server, available to the first party via a public network, to manage the interface.

50. (original) The method of claim 49, wherein the server comprises an internet server available to the first party using an internet browser.

51. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein said interface comprise an electronic document.

52. (original) The method of claim 51, wherein the electronic document includes objects compliant with a hypertext markup language HTML standard.

53. (original) The method of claim 52, wherein the HTML standard is XML.

54. (original) The method of claim 38, including providing information via said interface by which said one or more other parties may signal acceptance, the information being associated with said offering from the first party for use by said one or more other parties independent of the service provider.

Cancel claims 55-69, without prejudice.

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